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R. WAGNER

THE VALKYRIE

(F. Jameson)

SCHOTT & CO.
LONDON.

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THE VALKYRIE.

FIRST DAY OF THE TRILOGY:

THE RING OF THE NIBLUNG

BY

RICHARD WAGNER.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

FREDERICK JAMESON.

MAINZ-LEIPZIG

B. SCHOTT'S SÖHNE.

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Argument.

—o—

Act I. The interior of Hunding's dwelling. Siegmund, flying from his enemies, wounded and weaponless, enters and lies down to rest at the fire where he is presently found and tended by Sieglinde, Hunding's wife. Hunding on his return home consents to grant Siegmund shelter for the night, but discovering soon that he is an enemy of his clan, the Neidings, challenges him to mortal combat on the morrow. Later Sieglinde joins Siegmund and, in the course of a scene in which they confess their mutual love, shews him a sword buried in the stem of a large tree in the middle of the stage which had been placed there by an aged stranger during her wedding feast. Siegmund draws out the sword and the lovers prepare to fly together, discovering at the last moment that they are the twin children of Wälse (a name assumed by Wotan during his wanderings on earth).

Act II. A wild rocky place. Wotan orders Brünnhilde to protect Siegmund in the coming fight with Hunding. His design is that Siegmund and Sieglinde shall beget a race of heroes who may defend Walhall against his foes. He is however presently forced by Fricka, the guardian of vows and especially of marriage, to reverse his order. Brünnhilde finds Siegmund and announces to him his approaching death, but is so moved by his distress at the thought

of parting from Sieglinde that she disobeys Wotan and tries to shield him in the fight. Wotan, however, appears at the moment and thrusts forward his spear so that Siegmund's sword breaks upon it and he falls under a blow of Hunding's sword. Brünnhilde hastily picks up the bits of the broken sword and escapes with Sieglinde.

Act III. The Valkyries' rocky home. Brünnhilde and her eight sisters, Valkyries, are the children of Wotan by Erda. He employs them to fetch heroes from the battle-field to defend Walhall. Brünnhilde arrives with Sieglinde and unsuccessfully implores her sisters' help to shield her from Wotan's wrath. Signs of Wotan's approach are heard, and Brünnhilde urges Sieglinde to fly. She at first refuses, being quite benumbed by despair, but is persuaded to escape by Brünnhilde's prophecy that she will give birth to the world's greatest hero who will remake the broken sword of which she gives her the pieces. Wotan comes and, having driven away the other Valkyries, upbraids Brünnhilde and as a punishment casts her into a sleep which will endure till she is awakened by a man to whom she will be subject thenceforth. At her petition, however, he calls Loge, the fire-god, to surround the mountain top with fire, and promises that no one who fears the point of his sacred spear shall reach her.

———o———

PERSONS.

SIEGMUND.
HUNDING.
WOTAN.
SIEGLINDE.
BRÜNNHILDE.
FRICKA.

Eight Valkyries.

FIRST ACT.

—o—

The interior of a dwelling place.

In the centre stands the stem of a mighty ash-tree, the prominent roots of which spread themselves over the ground; the upper part of the tree is cut off by the roof, the spreading boughs passing through openings made to fit them. Round the stem, as the central point, an apartment has been built of roughly hewn logs, hung here and there with matting and woven hangings. In front, on the right, is the hearth, the chimney of which passes sideways through the roof. Behind the hearth is an inner room, like a store-room, which is approached by a few wooden steps: in front of it, half drawn, hangs a curtain. At the back is an entrance door with a smooth wooden latch. On the left is a door to the inner chamber, also approached by steps: further forward on the same side is a table with a broad bench behind it, fixed to the wall, and some wooden stools in front of it.

A short orchestral prelude of a turbulent stormy character introduces the action. As the curtain rises SIEGMUND hastily opens the entrance door from without and enters. It is towards evening, and a violent thunderstorm is just subsiding. SIEGMUND holds the latch in his hand for a moment and looks round the room: he appears exhausted with over-exertion: his dress and appearance shew that he is in flight. Seeing no one, he closes the door, strides towards the fire and throws himself wearily down on a bearskin.

Siegmund.

Whoe'er own this hearth,
here must I rest me.

He sinks back and remains awhile stretched out motionless. SIEGLINDE enters from the inner chamber, thinking that her husband has returned. Her grave look shews surprise when she finds a stranger stretched on the hearth.

Sieglinde

(still at the back).

A stranger here?
why came he hither?

(She comes nearer.)

What man is this
who lies on the hearth?

(As SIEGMUND does not move, she comes still nearer and looks at him.)

Worn and way-weary
lies he there.
Is it but weariness?
or is he sick? —

(She bends over him and listens.)

I hear still his breathing,
'tis sleep that hath seized him —
Valiant is he, me-seems,
though so worn he lies.

Siegmund

(suddenly raising his head).

A draught! a draught!

Sieglinde.

I bring thee water.

(She quickly takes a drinking horn and goes out. She returns with it filled and offers it to Siegmund.)

Drink to moisten
thy lips I have brought thee:
water, as thou didst wish!

SIEGMUND drinks and gives the horn back. As he signs his thanks with his head his eyes fix themselves on her with growing interest.

Siegmund.

Cooling relief
the water has wrought,
my weary load
now is made light:
refreshed is my heart,
mine eyes are gladdened
by blissful raptures of sight: —
who is't that gladdens them so?

Sieglinde.

This house and this wife
call Hunding owner;
stranger, take here thy rest:
tarry till he return!

Siegmund.

Weaponless am I:
a wounded guest
will thy husband make welcome.

Sieglinde
(with anxious haste)

Thy wounds now shew to me straight!

Siegmund
(shakes himself and springs up quickly to a sitting position).

But slight are they,
unworthy a word;
still whole are my limbs
and trustily knit.
If but half so well as my arm
shield and spear had availed me,
ne'er from foe had I fled; —
but in splinters were spear and shield.
The horde of foemen
harried me sore,
by storm and stress
spent was my force;
but quicker than I from foemen,
fled my faintness from me:
darkness had sunk on my lids,
now laughs the sunlight anew.

Sieglinde
(goes to the store-room, fills a horn with mead and offers it to Siegmund with friendly eagerness).

A quickening draught
of honeyed mead
mayst thou not scorn from me.

Siegmund.

Let it first touch thy lips?

SIEGLINDE sips from the horn and gives it back. SIEGMUND takes a long draught, while his gaze rests on her with growing warmth. Still gazing, he removes the horn from his lips and lets it sink slowly, whilst the expression of his features expresses strong emotion. He sighs deeply and gloomily lets his eyes sink to the ground.

Siegmund

(with trembling voice).

Thou hast tended an ill-fated one:
ill-fate
would I might turn from thee!
(He starts up as if to go.)
Good rest I found here
and sweet repose:
onward wend I my way.

Sieglinde

(turning quickly round).

Who pursues thee, that thou must fly?

Siegmund

(has stopped).

Ill-fate pursues me
where'er I wander;
ill-fate o'ertakes me
where'er I linger:
to thee, wife, ne'er may it come!
Forth from thy house I fly.
(He goes hastily to the door and lifts the latch.)

Sieglinde

(in impetuous self-forgetfulness, calling to him).

Then bide thou here!
Ill-fate thou canst not bring there
where ill-fate has made its home!

Siegmund

(deeply moved, remains standing. He looks searchingly at SIEGLINDE who casts down her eyes in shame and sadness. SIEGMUND returns. He leans against the hearth: his eyes fix themselves with calm and steady sympathy on SIEGLINDE).

Wehwalt called I myself:
Hunding here, then, shall find me.

SIEGLINDE slowly raises her eyes again to his; they regard each other, during a long silence, with an expression of the deepest emotion. She starts, listens and hears HUNDING, who is leading his horse to the stable outside. She goes quickly to the door and opens it.

———o———

(HUNDING, armed with shield and spear, enters and pauses at the threshold on perceiving SIEGMUND. He turns to SIEGLINDE with a look of stern enquiry.)

Sieglinde
(answering HUNDING's look).

Faint, this man
lay on our hearth:
need drove him to us.

Hunding.

Hast tended him?

Sieglinde.

A draught I gave to him;
welcomed him as guest!

Siegmund
(firmly and quietly watching HUNDING).

Rest and drink
offered she:
wouldst therefore chide the woman?

Hunding.

Sacred is my hearth:
sacred hold thou my house.

(To SIEGLINDE, as he takes off his armour and gives it to her.)

Set the meal now for us!

SIEGLINDE hangs the arms on branches of the ash-tree, fetches food and drink from the store-room and prepares supper.

Hunding
(looks keenly and with surprise at SIEGMUND's features which he compares with SIEGLINDE's; aside):

How like to the woman!
The serpent's deceit
glistens, too, in his glances.

(He hides his surprise and turns unconcernedly to SIEGMUND.)

Far, I trow,
led thee thy way;
no horse rode he
who here found rest:

what rugged paths
have wearied thy feet?

Siegmund.

Through brake and forest,
meadow and moor,
storm has pursued
and sorest need:
I know not the way I have come.
Whither it led me,
also I know not:
fain would I learn it from thee.

Hunding
(at the table, offering SIEGMUND a seat).

The roof and room
that shelter thee,
Hunding calls his own;
wendest thou hence
to the west thy way,
in homesteads rich
findest thou kinsmen
who guard the honour of Hunding:
guest, now grant me a grace,
and thy name make known in return.

SIEGMUND, who has taken his place at the table, gazes thoughtfully before him. SIEGLINDE has placed herself next to HUNDING, opposite to SIEGMUND, on whom she fastens her eyes with visible sympathy and intentness.

Hunding
(who watches them both).

Fearest thou
to give me thy trust?
to the wife here tell thy secret:
see her longing in her looks!

Sieglinde
(unembarassed and interested).

Guest, who thou art
I would know.

Siegmund

(looks up, gazes into her eyes and begins gravely).

Friedmund may I not call me;
Frohwalt, would that I were:
but Wehwalt — so must I name me.
Wolfé, I called my father:
alone was I not born;
for a sister twinned with me.
Soon lost were both
mother and maid;
her who me bore,
her who with me was born,
scarce have I ever beheld.
Warlike and strong was Wolfé;
and foes full many he found.
A hunting oft
went the son with the father;
once, worn from the chase,
we came to our home:
there lay the wolf's nest waste.
To ashes burnt
the goodly abode,
to dust the oak-tree's
branching stem;
struck dead was the mother's
valourous form,
and lost in the ruins
the sister's trace:
the Neidings' cruel host
had dealt us this deadly blow.
Unfriended fled
my father with me;
many years
the stripling lived on
with Wolfé in woodlands wild:
oft beset
were we by our foes;
but bravely battled
the Wolf-pair still.

(turning to HUNDING.)

A Wölfing tells thee the tale
whom as "Wölfing" many well know.

Hunding.

Marvels and monstrous stories
tellest thou, daring guest,
Wehwalt — the Wölfing!
Methinks, of the warrior pair
I heard dark rumours spoken,
though I nor Wolfé
nor Wölfing knew.

Sieglinde.

Yet further tell us, stranger:
where roams thy father now?

Siegmund.

A fiery onset on us
then did the Neidings begin:
but slain by the wolves
fell many a hunter,
in flight through the woods,
chased by their game,
like chaff were scattered the foes.
Yet torn from my father was I;
his trace I saw not,
though long was my seeking:
in the woods a wolf-skin
found I alone;
there, empty it lay,
my father found I not. —
From the woods driven afar,
my heart longed for men and for women. —
Amongst all folk,
where'er I fared,
if friend or wife
I sought to win,
still was I ever mistrusted:
ill-fate lay on me.
Whate'er right thing I wrought,

others counted it ill;
what seemed evil to me,
others greeted as good.
    In feuds I fell
    wherever I dwelt,
    wrath met me
    wherever I fared;
    striving for gladness,
    woe was my lot:
my name, then, be Wehwalt ever;
for woe still waits on my steps.

Hunding.

She who cast thee fate so forlorn, —
the Norn, then, loved thee not:
gladly greets thee no man
to whom as guest thou com'st.

Sieglinde.

Craven hearts only fear
a weaponless lonely man! —
    Tell us yet, guest,
    how in the fight
at last thy weapon was lost!

Siegmund.

    A sorrowful child
    cried for my help:
    her kinsmen sought
    to bind in wedlock,
unloved, a man with the maid
    Help against wrong
    gladly I gave,
    her ruthless clan
    met me in fight:
before me foemen fell.
Struck down and dead lay her brothers:
her arms round their bodies she clasped,
her grief had banished her wrath.
From wildly streaming eyes

she bathed the dead with her tears;
for her brothers in battle slain
lamented the ill-fated bride.
Then the host of kinsmen
surged like a storm;
full of fury,
vengeance they vowed on me:
ever new foemen
rose to assail me.
But from the place
ne'er moved the maid;
my shield and spear
sheltered her long,
till spear and shield
were hewn from my hand.
Wounded, weaponless stood I —
death I saw take the maid:
I fled from the furious host —
lifeless lay she on the dead.

(To SIEGLINDE with a look of sorrowful fervour.)

Now know'st thou, questioning wife,
why 'tis not Friedmund who greets thee!

(He stands up and walks to the hearth. SIEGLINDE looks on the ground, pale and deeply moved.)

Hunding

(rises).

I know a riotous race;
not holy it holds
what men revere:
'tis hated by all and by me.
For vengeance forth was I summoned,
payment to win me
for kinsmen's blood:
too late came I,
and now return home,
the flying outcast's trace
to find again in my house. —
My house holds thee,
Wölfing, to-day;

for the night, safe be thy rest:
with trusty weapon
defend thee to-morrow;
I choose the day for the fight:
as death-debt pay'st thou thy life.

(With anxious gestures SIEGLINDE steps between the two men.)

Hence from the hall!
linger not here!
My night-draught set me within,
and wait thou there for me.

SIEGLINDE stands awhile undecided and thoughtful. She turns slowly and with hesitating steps towards the store-room. There she again pauses and remains standing, lost in thought, with half averted face. With quiet resolution she opens the cupboard, fills a drinking horn, and shakes some spices into it from a box. She then turns her eyes on SIEGMUND so as to meet his gaze which he keeps unceasingly fixed on her. She perceives HUNDING watching them, and turns immediately to the bed-chamber. On the steps she turns once more, looks yearningly at SIEGMUND and indicates with her eyes, persistently and with eloquent earnestness, a particular spot in the ash-tree's stem. HUNDING starts and drives her with a violent gesture from the room. With a last look at SIEGMUND, she goes into the bed-chamber and closes the door after her.

Hunding

(taking his weapons from the tree-stem).

With weapons man should be armed. —
Thou, Wölfing, meet me to-morrow:
my word hearest thou —
ward thyself well!

(He goes into the chamber; the closing of the bolt is heard from within.)

Siegmund

(alone).

It has become quite dark. The hall is only lighted by a dull fire on the hearth. SIEGMUND sinks on a bench by the fire and broods silently for some time in great agitation.

A sword, my father foretold me,
should serve me in sorest need. —
Swordless I come
to my foeman's house;
as a hostage here
helpless I lie: —

a wife saw I,
wondrous and fair;
and blissful tremors
seize my heart:
the woman who holds me chained,
who with sweet enchantment wounds,
in thrall is held by the man
who mocks his weaponless foe. —
Wälse! Wälse!
Where is thy sword?
The trusty sword,
that in fight shall serve me,
when from my bosom outbreaks
the fury my heart now bears?

The fire falls together. From the flame which springs up a bright light strikes on the spot in the ash-stem indicated by Sieglinde's look, on which a sword-hilt is now clearly seen.

What gleameth there
from out the gloom?
What a beam breaks
from the ash-tree's stem!
The sightless eye
beholdeth a flash:
gay as laughter its light! —
How the glorious gleam
doth pierce my heart!
Is it the glance
of the woman so fair
that there clinging
behind her she left,
as from the hall she passed?

(The fire now gradually sinks.)

Darkening shadow
covered mine eyes;
but her glance's beam
fell on me then:
bringing me warmth and day.
Blessing came

with the sun's bright rays;
the gladdening splendour
encircled my head —
till behind mountains it sank.
Once more, ere day went hence,
fell a gleam on me here;
e'en the ancient ash-tree's stem
shone forth with a golden glow:
now pales the splendour —
the light dies out —
darkening shadow
gathers around me:
deep in my breast alone
yet glimmers a dim, dying glow.

The fire is quite extinguished: complete darkness. — The door at the side opens softly: SIEGLINDE, in a white garment, comes out and advances lightly but quickly towards the hearth.

Sieglinde.

Sleep'st thou, guest?

Siegmund
(in joyful surprise).

Who whispers there?

Sieglinde
(with furtive haste).

It is I: list to my words!
In deepest sleep lies Hunding,
o'ercome by a slumberous draught:
now, in the night, save thy life!

Siegmund
(Interrupting her passionately).

Thy coming is life!

Sieglinde.

A weapon let me now shew thee:
O might'st thou make it thine!
The first of heroes
then might I call thee:
to the strongest alone
was it decreed.

O heed thou well what I now tell thee!
    The kinsmen gathered
    here in the hall
to honour the wedding of Hunding:
    the woman he chose,
    by him unwooed,
miscreants gave him to wife.
    Sad I sat
    the while they were drinking;
a stranger entered the hall:
an old man clad all in grey;
low down hung his hat,
and one of his eyes was hidden;
    at the other's flash
    fear came on all men,
    when their eyes met
    its threat'ning glance:
    yet on me
    lingered his look
with sweet yearning regret,
sorrow and solace in one.
    On me glancing,
    he glared on the others,
as a sword he swung in his hands;
    which then he struck
    in the ash-tree stem;
to the hilt buried it lies: —
but one man might win the weapon;
he who could draw it forth.
    Of all the heroes,
    though bravely they laboured,
not one the weapon could win;
    guests came hither
    and guests departed;
the strongest tugged at the steel —
not a whit it stirred in the stem:
there cleaves in silence the sword. —
Then knew I who he was
who in sorrow greeted me:

I know too
who alone
shall draw the sword from the stem.
O might I to-day
find here the friend,
come from afar
to the saddest wife:
whate'er I have suffered
in bitterest pain,
whate'er I have borne
in shame and disgrace, —
sweet were my vengeance,
all were atoned for!
Regained were then
whate'er I had lost,
and won, too, were then
all I have wept for —
found the delivering friend,
my hero held in my arms!

Siegmund

(embracing Sieglinde with ardour).

Thee, woman most blest,
holds now the friend,
for weapon and wife decreed!
Hot in my breast
burns now the oath
that weds me ever to thee.
Whate'er I have sought
in thee now I see;
in thee all
that has failed me is found!
Though thou wert shamed
and woe was my lot;
though I was scorned
and dishonoured wert thou:
joyful revenge now
calleth the glad ones!
Loud laugh I
in fullest delight,

holding embraced all thy glory,
feeling the beats of thy heart!

Sieglinde

(starts back in alarm and tears herself away).

Ha, who went? who entered here?

The door remains open; outside a glorious spring night; the full-moon shines in, throwing its bright light on the palr, so that suddenly they can fully and clearly see each other.

Siegmund

(in gentle ecstasy).

No one went
but one has come:
laughing, the spring
enters the hall!

(He draws her to him on the couch with tender vehemence.)

Winter storms have waned
in the moon of may,
with tender radiance
sparkles the spring;
on balmy breezes,
light and lovely,
weaving wonders,
on he floats;
o'er wood and meadow
wafts his breathing,
widely open
laughs his eye:
in blithesome song of birds
resounds his voice,
sweetest fragrance
breathes he forth:
from his ardent blood bloom out
all joy-giving blossoms,
bud and shoot
spring up by his might.
With gentle weapons' charm
he forces the world;
winter and storm yield

to his strong attack:
assailed by his hardy strokes
now the doors are shattered that once,
fast and defiant,
held us — parted from him. —

To clasp his sister
hither he flew;
'twas love that lured the spring;
within our bosoms
deeply she hid:
now gladly she laughs to the light.
The bride and sister
is freed by the brother;
in ruin lies
what held them apart;
joyfully greet now
the loving pair:
made one are love and spring!

Sieglinde.

Thou art the spring
that I have so longed for
in frosty winter's spell.
My heart greeted thee
with blissfullest dread,
as thy look at first on me lightened. —
Strange has seemed all I e'er saw,
friendless all that was round me;
like far off things and unknown,
all that ever came near.
When thou camest
all was made clear:
as my eyes on thee fell
mine wert thou only:
all I hid in my heart,
all I am,
bright as the day
dawned on my sight,
like echoing tones

struck on my ear,
as in winter's frosty desert
my eyes first beheld the friend.

(She hangs in rapture on his neck and gazes closely into his face.)

Siegmund.

O sweetest enchantment!
woman most blest!

Sieglinde
(close to his eyes).

O let me closer
to thee still press me,
and see more clearly
the holy light
that forth from eyes
and face doth break
and so sweetly sways all my sense!

Siegmund.

Beneath spring's moon
shinest thou bright,
wrapped in glory
of waving hair:
what has ensnared me
now well I know —
in rapture feasteth my look.

Sieglinde
(pushes the locks back from his brow, and gazes at him with astonishment).

How broadly shines
thy open brow,
the wandering veins
in thy temples entwine!
I tremble with the rapture
of my delight —
a marvel wakes my remembrance: —
my eyes beheld thee of old
whom first I saw to-day!

Siegmund.

A love-dream wakes
in me the thought: —
in fiery longing
cam'st thou to me!

Sieglinde.

The stream has shewn me
my pictured face —
and now again I behold it:
as from the water it rose,
show'st thou my image anew!

Siegmund.

Thou art the image
I held in my heart.

Sieglinde
(quickly turning her eyes away from him).

O hush! again
the voice is sounding:
I heard it, methinks,
once as a child — —
but no! of late I have heard it —
yes, when the echo's sound
gave back my voice in the woods.

Siegmund.

O loveliest song
that sounds as I listen!

Sieglinde
(again gazing into his eyes).

Thine eyes' bright glow
erewhile on me shone:
the stranger so glanced,
greeting the wife,
as he soothed with his look her grief.
By his glance
then knew him his child —
almost by his name did I call him —
(pausing.)
Wehwalt art thou in truth?

Siegmund.

Ne'er call me so,
since thou art mine:
now won is the highest rapture!

Sieglinde.

And Friedmund may'st thou
gladly not name thee?

Siegmund.

Call me, thyself,
as thou wouldst I were called:
my name I take but from thee!

Sieglinde.

Yet calledst thou Wolfè thy father?

Siegmund.

Wolf was he to fearful foxes!
But he whose eye
proudly did glisten,
as, fairest one, glistens thine own,
of old — Wälse was named.

Sieglinde
(beside herself).

Was Wälse thy father,
and art thou a Wälsung?
Struck was for thee
the sword in the stem —
so let me now name thee
as I have loved thee:
Siegmund —
so name I thee!

Siegmund
(springs up).

Siegmund call me,
for Siegmund am I!
Be witness this sword
I hold now undaunted!

Wälse foretold me
in sorest need
this should I find:
I grasp it now!
Holiest love's
most highest need,
love-longing's piercing
passionate need,
burning bright in my breast,
drives to deeds and death:
Nothung! Nothung! —
so name I thee, sword —
Nothung! Nothung!
conquering steel!
Shew now thy biting
severing blade!
come forth from thy scabbard to me!

With a powerful effort SIEGMUND pulls the sword from the tree, and shews it to the astonished and enraptured SIEGLINDE.

Siegmund, the Wälsung,
seest thou here!
As bride-gift
he brings thee this sword;
so wins for him
the woman most blest;
from foeman's house
thus bears her away.
Far from here
follow me now,
forth to the laughing
house of spring:
there guards thee Nothung the sword,
when Siegmund lies captive to love!

(He has embraced her in order to draw her away with him.)

Sieglinde

(in highest excitement she tears herself away and stands before him).

Art thou Siegmund,
standing before me?
Sieglinde am I,

who for thee longed:
thine own twin sister
thou winnest at once with the sword!

Siegmund.

Bride and sister
be to thy brother:
then flourish the Wälsungs for aye!

He draws her to him with passionate fervour. — The curtain falls quickly.

SECOND ACT.

A wild rocky place.

In the background a gorge slopes from below to a high ridge of rocks, from which the ground again sinks to the front.

WOTAN, fully armed, carrying his spear: before him BRÜNNHILDE, as a Valkyrie, likewise fully armed.

Wotan.

Now bridle thy horse,
warrior maid;
soon will blaze
furious strife.
Brünnhilde, haste to the fray,
to shield the Wälsung in fight!
There let Hunding go,
where he belongs;
in Walhall want I him not.
Then ready and fleet
ride to the field.

Brünnhilde
(springs shouting from rock to rock up the height on the right).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!
Hahei! Hahei! Heiaho!

On a high peak she stops, looks into the gorge at the back and calls to Wotan.

Take warning, father,
look to thyself;
storm and strife
must thou withstand:
Fricka comes to thee here,
drawn hither in her car by her rams.
Hei! how she swings
the golden scourge!
The wretched beasts
are groaning with fear;
wheels furiously rattle;
fierce she fares to the fray.
In strife like this
I take no delight,
sweet though to me
are the fights of men;
then take now thy stand for the storm:
I leave thee with mirth to thy fate.
Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!
Hahei! Hahei! Hojohei!

She disappears behind the mountain height at the side, whilst FRICKA arrives from the gorge in a car drawn hy two harnessed rams: she descends quickly and strides impetuously towards WOTAN in the foreground.

Wotan
(seeing her approach).

The wonted storm!
the wonted strife!
But firm here must I hold me!

Fricka.

Where in mountain wilds thou hid'st
to shun the eyes of thy wife,
lonely here
seek I thee out,
that help to me thou may'st promise.

Wotan.

What troubles Fricka
freely be told.

Fricka.

I have heard Hunding's cry,
for vengeance called he on me,
and wedlock's guardian
gave ear to him:
I made oath
to punish the deed
of this infamous pair
who rashly wrought him a wrong. —

Wotan.

What so evil
wrought the pair
whom spring united in love?
'Twas love's enchantment
enraptured them;
I rule not where love doth reign.

Fricka.

Thou feign'st to be foolish and deaf,
as though thou knew'st not, in sooth,
that now for wedlock's
holy oath,
profaned so rudely, I call thee!

Wotan.

Unholy
hold I the oath
that binds unloving hearts;
from me, prithee,
do not demand
that by force I hold
what withstands thy power:
for where bold spirits are moving,
I stir them ever to strife.

Fricka.

Deemest thou praiseworthy
wedlock's breach?
Then prate thou yet farther
and call it holy

that shame now blossoms forth
from bond of a twinborn pair!
I shudder at heart,
my reason doth faint,
brother embraced
as bride his own sister!
When — was it e'er known
that brother and sister were lovers?

Wotan.

Known 'tis now to thee!
Then learn thou so
what unhelped may happen
though never before it befel.
That love has enslaved them
clearly thou seest;
then words of wisdom now hear!
That sweetest bliss
for thy blessing reward thee,
with loving laughter bless thou
Siegmund's and Sieglinde's bond.

Fricka
(breaking out in deep indignation).

Is all, then, at end
with the glory of godhood
since thou begatt'st
the riotous Wälsungs?
I now speak it;
pierced is thy thought?
Nought worth is to thee
the race of eternals!
Away thou castest
what once thou didst honour;
thou breakest the bonds
thou thyself hast ordained,
loosest laughing
all heaven's hold —
that in wanton freedom may flourish
this insolent twinborn pair,
of thy falseness the unholy fruit. —

O, why wail I
o'er wedlock and vows
which thyself thou first hast profaned.
The truest wife
thou still hast betrayed;
never a deep
and never a height
but there turned thirsting
ever thy looks,
as thy changeful humour allured thee,
and stung my heart with thy scorn.
Saddened in spirit
must I behold thee
fare to the fight
with the graceless maidens
whom lawless love
hath given to thee:
for thy wife still fearedst thou so,
that the Valkyries' band
and Brünnhild' herself,
thine own wish's bride,
to the goddess as handmaids thou gav'st.
But now, when unwonted
names have ensnared thee,
as "Wälse" wolfish
in woods thou hast wandered;
now that to deepest
disgrace thou hast fallen, —
to foster mortals
begot of thy falseness:
shamed by whelps of a wolf
thou fling'st at thy feet, too, thy wife!
Then finish thy work!
Fill now the cup!
The betrayed one trample beneath thee!

Wotan
(quietly).

Nought learnedst thou
when I would teach thee

what never canst thou discern,
till day has dawned on the deed.
Wonted things only
canst thou conceive,
but what ne'er yet befel —
thereon broodeth my thought! —
This thing hear thou!
Needed is one
who, free from help of the godhead,
fights free from the godhead's control.
So alone were he
meet for the deed
which, though the need of our godhood,
to achieve is denied to a god.

Fricka.

With darksome meanings
wouldst thou mislead me:
was aught of worth
to heroes e'er granted
which to their gods themselves was denied,
by whose grace alone they may work?

Wotan.

Their own spirit's freedom
count'st thou for nought?

Fricka.

Who breathed their souls into men?
Who lightened their purblind eyes?
Behind thy shield
bold is their mien,
spurred on by thee
they strive to arise:
thou stirr'st them alone
whom to me, thy wife, thou dost laud.
With new deceit
wilt thou now delude me?
by new devices
wouldst thou escape me?

but not this Wälsung
from me shalt thou win;
in him find I but thee,
for through thee dares he alone.

Wotan.

In sorest sorrow
he wrought for himself:
my shield sheltered him not.

Fricka.

To-day, then, shield him not!
Take back the sword
that thou hast bestowed.

Wotan.

The sword?

Fricka.

Aye, the sword,
the magical,
glittering sword,
that thou, god, didst give thy son!

Wotan.

Siegmund has won it
himself in his need.

Fricka.

Thou brought'st him the need,
and the conquering sword.
Wouldst thou deceive me
who day and night
in thy foot-steps have fared?
For him struckest thou
the sword in the stem,
thou didst promise him
the sacred blade;
wilt thou deny, then,
that thy craft alone
had lured him where it lay hid?
(WOTAN makes a wrathful gesture.)

The gods do not
battle with bondsmen,
the free but punish transgressors.
Though against thy might
war have I waged:
yet Siegmund shall fall as my slave.
(WOTAN makes another vehement gesture.)
He who as bondsman
bendeth before thee —
shall he outbrave
thy eternal bride?
Shall in my shame
the basest one scorn me?
to the froward a spur,
a scoff to the free!
That can my husband not wish me,
not so shall a goddess be shamed.

Wotan
(gloomy).
What demand'st thou?

Fricka.
Shield not the Wälsung!

Wotan
(with muffled voice).
His way let him go.

Fricka.
But thou shelter him not,
when to arms the avenger calls!

Wotan.
I — shelter him not.

Fricka.
Seek not to trick me,
look in my eyes!
the Valkyrie turn, too, from him!

Wotan.
The Valkyrie free shall choose.

Fricka.

Not so; for alone
thy command she obeys:
give order that Siegmund fall.

Wotan
(breaking out, after a violent inner struggle).

I cannot o'erthrow him,
he found my sword.

Fricka.

Destroy then its magic,
be shattered the steel:
shieldless let him be found!
(BRÜNNHILDE's call is heard from the heights).
There comes now thy valiant maid;
shouting hither she fares.

Wotan
(gloomily, aside).

I called her for Siegmund to horse!
(BRÜNNHILDE appears with her horse on the rocky path to the right. On seeing FRICKA she breaks off suddenly and, during the following, she slowly and silently leads her horse down the mountain path and hides it in a cave.

Fricka.

Thy eternal consort's
holiest honour
her shield shall guard to-day!
Derided by men,
deprived of our might,
surely we gods were o'erthrown,
were to-day my right,
resplendent and pure,
not avenged by thy valourous maid.
The Wälsung falls for my honour:
doth Wotan now pledge me his oath?

Wotan
(throwing himself on to a rocky seat in deep dejection).

Take the oath!

(FRICKA strides towards the back: there she meets BRÜNNHILDE and pauses a moment before her.)

Fricka

(to Brünnhilde).

Warfather
waits for thee:
let him now tell thee
how the lot is decreed.

(She drives quickly away.)

—o—

Brünnhilde

(comes forward with wondering and anxious mien to WOTAN, who, leaning back on the rocky seat, is sunk in gloomy brooding).

Ill, surely,
closed the strife;
Fricka laughs at its ending.
Father, what woe
hast thou to tell me?
Gloomy seem'st thou and cheerless!

Wotan

(drops his arm helplessly and lets his head sink on his breast).

I lie in fetters
forged by me,
I, least free of all living!

Brünnhilde.

Ne'er saw I thee so:
what gnaws at thy heart?

Wotan

(from this point WOTAN's expression and gestures grow in intensity culminating in a fearful outburst).

O infinite shame!
O shameful distress!
Gods' despair!
Gods' despair!
Unbounded rage!
Unending grief!
Most joyless am I of all living!

Brünnhilde

(Terrified, she throws shield, spear and helmet from her and sinks at WOTAN's feet in anxious solicitude).

Father! Father!

Tell me what ails thee?
Why so fill'st thou thy child with dismay!
Have trust in me,
to thee aye true!
See Brünnhild' entreateth.

(Sbe lays her head and hands with loving concern on his knees and breast.)

Wotan

(looks long in ber eyes; then he strokes her hair witb unconcious tenderness. As if coming to himself out of deep brooding, he at last begins very softly).

If I now tell it,
shall I not loosen
my will's o'ermastering hold?

Brünnhilde

(answering him in the same low voice).

To Wotan's will thou speakest,
when thou tell'st what thou wilt;
what — am I,
if not thy will alone?

Wotan.

What in words to none other I utter,
still will remain
unspoken for ever:
I speak in secret,
speaking to thee. — — —

(With a muffled voice.)

When youthful love's
delight from me fled,
my spirit yet longed for sway:
by force of wildest
wishes impelled,
I won myself the world;
faithless I wrought,
unknowing, falseness,
binding by bargains
what hid mishap;
craftily guided by Loge,
who wandered then afar.

Yet the passion
of love would not loose me,
in my might, for love was my longing.
The child of night,
the craven Nibelung,
Alberich, broke from its bonds;
for love he forswore
and so won by his oath
the glist'ning gold of the Rhine,
and with it unmeasured might.
The ring that he wrought
I craftily won me,
but to the Rhine
gave I not again:
with it I paid
the price of Walhall,
the home the giants had built me,
wherefrom I now ruled all the world.
She who doth know
all things that were,
Erda, the wisest
holiest Wala,
spoke ill redes of the ring,
told of eternal disaster.
Of the downfall I craved
yet more tidings;
but voiceless she vanished from sight.
Then was saddened my lightsome heart,
to know then became all my need:
to the womb of earth
wended I my way,
by love's enchantment
forced I the Wala,
troubling her wisdom's calm,
and constrained her tongue to speak.
Counsel I won from her words;
from me yet she harboured a pledge:
the world's wisest of women
gave me, Brünnhilde, thee.

With eight sisters
fostered wert thou;
that ye Valkyries
might forefend
the doom that the Wala's
dark words foretold:
the shameful defeat of the great ones.
That foes might find us
strong for the strife,
heroes I bade you to bring me:
the slaves we had held
by our laws in bondage,
the mortals whom
in their might we defied,
whom, enthralled by darksome,
treacherous bargains,
we bound in obedience
blindly to serve us —
these ever to storm
and strife should ye kindle,
their hearts rouse up
to ruthless war,
that valiant hosts of heroes
should gather on Walhall's height!

Brünnhilde.

And thy halls filled we with heroes:
many I brought to thee there.
If we ne'er have failed thee,
whence cometh thy fear?

Wotan.

Another ill,
heed thou it well,
darkly the Wala foretold! —
Through Alberich's host
threatens our downfall:
with envious rage
burneth the Niblung;
but no more I dread
now his dusky battalions.

by my heroes safe were I held.
Yet, if e'er the ring
were won by the Niblung,
then lost were Walhall for ever:
for to him alone
who love forswore
is it given
to use the runes
of the ring to the endless
shame of the gods;
my heroes' faith
from me would he turn,
and stir to strife
my fighters themselves,
and with their might
give battle to me.
Urged by fear then I thought
to rob the ring from the foeman.
The giant Fafner,
who from my hand
the accursed gold
as wage did win —
he now guardeth the hoard
for which his brother he slew.
From him must I wrest the ring
that myself I gave him as guerdon.
But the bond I have made
forbids me to strike him;
mightless my force
would fall before him:
these are the fetters
that now hold me:
I, who by bargains am lord,
to my bargains eke am a slave.
But one may dare
what to me is denied:
a hero never
helped by my counsel,
to me unknown

ad free from my grace,
unaware,
forced by his need,
without command,
with his own right arm,
doeth the deed
that I must shun,
the deed my tongue ne'er told,
though yet my deepest desire. —
He, at war with the god,
for me fighteth,
the friendliest foe.
O, how shall I find
or shape me the free one,
by me ne'er shielded,
in his firm defiance
the dearest to me?
How fashion the Other
who, not through me,
but from his will
for my ends shall work?
O, godhead's distress!
Sorest disgrace!
In loathing find I
ever myself
in all my hand has created;
the Other whom I have longed for,
that Other I ne'er shall find:
himself must the free one create him;
my hand nought shapeth but slaves.

Brünnhilde.

But the Wälsung, Siegmund,
works for himself?

Wotan.

Wildly roaming
with him in woodlands,
ever against the gods,
then his spirit I stirred: —

now 'gainst the godhead's vengeance
guarded is he by the sword
that through the grace
of a god was bestowed.
Why would I trick
myself with my cunning?
So lightly my falsehood
Fricka laid bare:
before her glance
I stood in my shame!
To her will I now must yield me.

Brünnhilde.

Then tak'st thou from Siegmund thy shield?

Wotan

(breaking out in wild pain and despair).

When my hand touched Alberich's ring,
greed was mine for the gold.
The curse that I fled
now flies not from me: —
What I love best must I surrender,
slay him whom most I cherish,
basely betray him
who in me trusts
Fade then away,
splendour and pomp,
glory of godhood's
glittering shame!
Let fall in ruins
what I have raised!
Ended is my work;
but one thing waits me yet:
the downfall — —
the downfall! — —

(He pauses in thought.)

And for the downfall
works Alberich;
now I grasp
all the secret sense

that filled the words of the Wala:
"when the dusky foe of love
grimly getteth a son,
the doom of gods
delays not long."
Of the Niblung late
a rumour I heard,
that the dwarf had won a woman,
by gold gaining her grace:
the fruit of hate
beareth a wife;
the child of spite
grows in her womb;
this wonder befel
the loveless Niblung;
yet, though I loved so truly,
the free one I never might win.
(Rising up in bitter wrath.)
Then take thou my blessing,
Nibelung son!
What I have loathed
now mayst thou inherit;
the empty pomp of the gods
thy envious greed shall consume!

Brünnhilde
(alarmed).

O say! tell me,
what task must be mine?

Wotan
(bitterly).

Fight truly for Fricka;
ward for her wedlock's oath!
What she doth choose,
that too be my choice:
what good can my will e'er gain me?
for the free one can it not fashion
for Fricka's servants
fight thou alone!

Brünnhilde.

Ah! repent thee,
take back thy word!
Thou lov'st Siegmund;
knowing thy love, —
to serve thee, safe will I shield him.

Wotan.

Siegmund shalt thou vanquish,
and Hunding as victor shall strike!
Ward thyself well,
and hold thyself firm;
bring all thy boldness
and skill to the strife:
a sure sword
swings Siegmund; —
faint-heart wilt thou not find!

Brünnhilde.

He whom thou still
hast taught me to love,
who in glorious valour
was ever thy dearest —
for his sake now thy wavering
word I defy!

Wotan.

Ha, darest thou?
Floutest thou me?
Who art thou who but the fettered
blind slave of my will?
In that I have spoken,
such is my shame
that e'en thou, my creature,
dost meet me with scorn?
Know'st thou, child, my wrath?
Thy spirit were crushed
if on thee lighted
its fierce withering flash!
Within my bosom
fury lies hid

that in woe and waste
layeth a world
that in my joy on me laughed:
woe to him whom it strikes!
Sad in sooth were his fate! —
I warn thee then,
wake not my wrath!
With heed fulfil my behest:
Siegmund strike thou!
Such be the Valkyrie's task!

(He storms away and quickly disappears among the rocks to the left.)

Brünnhilde

(stands for a long time confused and alarmed).

Ne'er saw I
Warfather so,
though stirred to anger oft by strife.

(She stoops down sadly and takes up her weapons, with which she arms herself again.)

Why irks me
my weapons' weight?
Ah, how light they lay
when freely I fought!
A hateful fight
drags me hence to-day.

(She gazes thoughtfully before her.)

Woe! my Wälsung!
In sorest sorrow
the true one must falsely forsake thee!

She turns round and sees SIEGMUND and SIEGLINDE as they come up from the gorge: she watches them for a moment and then goes into the cavern to her horse, disappearing from the audience.

—o—

SIEGMUND and SIEGLINDE appear on the pass. She comes hastily forwards; he tries to restrain her.

Siegmund.

Stay thou but here,
rest thee a while!

Sieglinde.

Farther! Farther!

Siegmund

(embraces her with gentle force).

No farther now!
O linger, sweetest one, here!
From blissfullest rapture
break'st thou away,
with frenzied haste
fleeing afar:
scarce could I o'ertake thy flight:
through wood and field
over rock and fell,
speechless, silent
flying along,
my voice called thee in vain!

(She stares wildly before her.)

Take now thy rest:
speak but a word!
End all this speechless dread!
See, thy brother
holdeth his bride:
Siegmund's heart is thy home!

Sieglinde

(gazes with growing rapture into his eyes, then throws her arms passionately round his neck and so remains; she then starts up in sudden terror).

Away! away!
fly the profaned one!
Unholily
holds thee my arm;
disgraced, dishonoured,
dead is this form:
cast it from thee,
flee from the corpse!
let winds waft her away
who, graceless, herself gave to thee!

When in his loving embrace,
when blissful delight she found,

when all his love was her own
who all her love had awaked —
from the holiest height
of sweetest rapture,
that all her soul
and senses o'erflowed,
loathing and horror
for hateful dishonour
filled with dismay
the traitorous woman,
who once a bridegroom obeyed,
and loveless lay in his arms! —
Leave the accurst one,
far let her flee!
Dishonoured am I,
bereft of grace:
the purest hero
must I abandon:
to thee, the most glorious,
ne'er may I give me:
shame would fall on the brother,
scath on the rescuing friend!

Siegmund.

Whate'er shame has been wrought
be paid by the sinner's blood!
Then flee thou no farther;
wait for the foeman;
fall must he before me:
when Nothung's point
doth pierce his heart,
vengeance then wilt thou have won!

Sieglinde
(starts up and listens).

Hark! the horn-calls —
hearest thou not? —
All around
cries of revenge
from wood and vale

swell on our ears.
Hunding has wakened
from heavy sleep!
Kinsmen and bloodhounds
calls he together;
goaded to rage,
dogs are howling,
loud baying to heaven
against breaking of wedlock's oath!

(Gazes madly before her.)

Where art thou Siegmund?
still art thou here?
fervently loved one,
radiant brother!
Let thine eyes' bright beams
fall yet once more upon me:
do not disdain
the accursed woman's kiss! —
Hark! o hark!
that is Hunding's horn!
All his pack pursue
in mighty force:
no sword helps thee
against the hounds: —
let it go, Siegmund! —
Siegmund — where art thou? —
Ha, there! I see thee now!
Terrible sight! —
Dogs are gnashing
their teeth after flesh;
no heed they take
of the hero's glance;
by thy feet they seize thee
with fast-holding fangs. —
Thou fall'st —
in splinters the sword hath sprung: —
the ash tree sinks —
the stem is rent!

Brother! my brother:
Siegmund — ha! —
(She sinks senseless into SIEGMUND's arms.)

Siegmund.

Sister! Beloved!

He listens to her breathing and convinces himself that she still lives. He then lets her slip downwards so that, as he himself sinks into a sitting posture, her head rests on his lap. In this position they both remain until the end of the following scene.

A long silence, during which SIEGMUND bends over SIEGLINDE with tender care, and presses a long kiss on her brow.

BRÜNNHILDE leading her horse by the bridle, has slowly and solemnly walked forward from the cave, and now stands beside SIEGMUND, but a little apart from him. She carries her shield and spear in one hand, resting the other on her horse's neck, and thus in grave silence she watches SIEGMUND for some time.

Brünnhilde.

Siegmund!
Look on me!
I come
to call thee hence.

Siegmund
(raises his eyes to her).

Who art thou, say,
who dost stand so beauteous and stern?

Brünnhilde.

Death-doomed is he
who looks upon me;
who meets my glance
must turn from the light of life.
On the war-field alone,
I come to heroes;
those whom I greet,
with me needs must go hence!

Siegmund
(looks long, firmly and searchingly into her eyes, then bows his head in thought and at length turns resolutely to her again).

If death be his,
whither lead'st thou the hero?

Brünnhilde.

To Wotan,
who casteth the lot,
lead I thee:
to Walhall wend with me.

Siegmund.

On Walhall's height,
Wotan alone shall I find?

Brünnhilde.

The fallen heroes'
hallowed band
shall greet thee there
with high welcome and love.

Siegmund.

Dwelleth in Walhall
Wälse, the Wälsung's father?

Brünnhilde.

His father there
will the Wälsung find.

Siegmund.

Gladly will woman
welcome me there?

Brünnhilde.

Wishmaidens
wait on thee there:
Wotan's daughter
friendly there filleth thy cup.

Siegmund.

Fair art thou,
and holy before me
stands Wotan's child:
yet one thing tell me, immortal!
Go brother and sister
to Walhall together?
shall there Siegmund
Sieglinde find?

Brünnhilde.

Here on earth
must she still linger:
Siegmund
will find not Sieglinde there.

Siegmund.

Then greet for me Walhall,
greet for me Wotan,
greet for me Wälse
and all the heroes,
greet too the beauteous
wish-maidens:
to them I follow thee not!

Brünnhilde.

Thou sawest the Valkyrie's
withering glance;
with her must thou now fare!

Siegmund.

Where Sieglinde lives
in weal or woe,
there will Siegmund too linger:
thy withering glance
served not to fright me,
nor shall it e'er force me hence!

Brünnhilde.

While life is thine,
force were in vain;
but death shall vanquish thee, fool:
death-doom to bring thee
I am here.

Siegmund.

Whose hand, then, shall strike,
if I must fall?

Brünnhilde.

Hunding striketh the blow.

Siegmund.

Bring threats more dire,
if thou wouldst daunt me.
Lurkest thou here
lusting for strife,
choose thou him for thy prey:
methinks he will fall in the fight!

Brünnhilde,
(shaking her head).

Thine, Wälsung —
hearken to me —
thine is the death decreed.

Siegmund.

Know'st thou this sword?
From him it came
who holds me safe:
through his sword thy threats I defy!

Brünnhilde
(with raised voice).

He who bestowed it
sends thee now death:
for, the spell he takes from the sword!

Siegmund
(vehemently).

Still! and fright not
the slumberer here!
(He bends tenderly, in an out-burst of grief, over Sieglinde.)
Woe! woe!
Sweetest wife!
Thou saddest among all the faithful!
'Gainst thy peace rages
the world now in arms;
and I, who alone am thy friend,
for whom thou the world hast defied —
may I not shield,
may I not defend thee,
betray thee must I in the fight? —
O, shame on him
who bestowed the sword,

and tricks me with trustless blade!
If I must fall, then,
to Walhall I fare not:
Hella hold me her own!

Brünnhilde
(moved).

So lightly prizest thou
bliss everlasting?
All to thee is
this hapless wife
who faint and careworn,
helplessly hangs in thine arms?
Nought else deemest thou good?

Siegmund
(looking up to her bitterly).

So young and fair
thou shinest to me,
yet how cold and hard
now knows thee my heart!
Canst thou but mock me,
then take thyself hence,
thou cruel merciless maid!
Or, if thou dost hunger
for my distress,
then freely feast on my woe;
let my grief quicken
thy envious heart: —
but of Walhall's loveless raptures
speak not, prithee, to me!

Brünnhilde
(with increasing emotion).

I see the distress
that doth gnaw at thy heart,
I feel all the hero's
holiest grief — —
Siegmund, to me give thy wife,
let her safeguard be my shield!

Siegmund.

No other than I,
while she lives, shall safeguard the pure one;

if death be my doom,
I will slay the slumberer here!

Brünnhilde.

Wälsung! Madman!
Hearken to me!
To me trust thy wife
for the pledge's sake
that in rapture from thee she received!

Siegmund
(drawing his sword).

This sword,
though by traitor to true man decreed! —
this sword,
that fails me in face of my foe: —
serves it not then against foe,
right well it shall serve against friend! —
(He points the sword at SIEGLINDE.)
Two lives now
laugh to thee here:
take them, Nothung,
envious steel!
take them with one fell stroke!

Brünnhilde
(in a passionate outburst of sympathy).

Forbear! Wälsung!
Hearken to me!
Sieglind' shall live, then, —
and, Siegmund, live thou with her!
'Tis thus decreed; —
recalled the death-doom:
thine, Siegmund, —
thine be triumph and bliss!
(Horn-calls are heard in the far distance.)
Hear'st thou the call?
Prepare thyself now!
Trust to the sword,
and strike without fear.
sure striketh the blade,
as the Valkyrie's shield is sure! —

Farewell, Siegmund,
hero most blest!
On the field once more shall I find thee!

She hastens away and disappears with her horse in a gorge on the right. SIEGMUND looks after her, relieved and joyful.

The stage has become gradually dark: heavy thunder-clouds sink down over the background and hide the rocks, the gorge, and the high mountain pass gradually and completely. From all sides distant horn-calls are heard, which come nearer and nearer during the following scene.

Siegmund

(again bends over SIEGLINDE, listening to her breathing).

Slumber charms
with soothing spell
the fair one's pain and grief.
When the Valkyrie hither came,
brought she, then, this blissful repose?
Would not the furious fight
wake fear in her sorrowing heart? —
Lifeless seems she
who yet hath life:
her sorrow is soothed
by a smiling dream —

(New horn-calls.)

So slumber still on
till the fight be fought
and peace to thee bring joy!

(He lays her gently on the rocky seat and kisses her forehead, then hears Hunding's horn-call and starts up with resolution.)

Thou who dost call,
arm thyself now;
whate'er is due
take thou here:
Nothung payeth the debt!

(He hastens to the background and, on reaching the pass, disappears in the dark storm-cloud from which a flash of lightning immediately breaks.)

Sieglinde

(begins to move restlessly in her dreams).

Would now but father come home!
With the boy he still roams in the woods.
Mother! Mother!

I quake with fear: —
with eyes unfriendly
glower the strangers! —
Misty darkness
fills all the air —
fiery tongues
are flaming around —
they burn the house —
o, help us, brother!
Siegmund! Siegmund!

(Vivid lightning pierces the clouds, and a terrible thunder-clap wakes SIEGLINDE: she springs up suddenly.)

Siegmund! Ha!

She stares round her with growing terror: — nearly the whole of the stage is covered by black thunder-clouds; continual thunder and lightning. From all sides the horn-calls approach nearer and nearer.

Hunding's
(voice, in the background, from the mountain pass).

Wehwalt! Wehwalt!
Stand there and fight,
else with the hounds must I hold thee.

Siegmund's
(voice, from farther off in the ravine).

Where hidest thou
that I can find thee not?
Stand that I may face thee!

Sieglinde
(listening in fearful terror).

Hunding — Siegmund —
could I but see them!

Hunding's
(voice).

Fly not, thou traitorous wooer!
Fricka striketh thee here!

Siegmund's
(voice, now likewise from the pass).

Still ween'st thou me weaponless,
craven wight.
Threat not with women,

thyself do battle,
lest Fricka fail hee at last!
For see: from thy house-tree's
blossoming stem
I drew undaunted the sword;
and its edge right soon shalt thou taste!

A flash of lightning for a moment illummes the pass, on which HUNDING and SIEGMUND are seen fighting.

Sieglinde

(with her utmost force).

Hold your hands, ye madmen!
Murder me first!

She rushes towards the pass: but suddenly, from above the combatants on the right, a flash breaks forth so vividly that she staggers aside as if blinded. In the glare of light BRÜNNHILDE appears floating above SIEGMUND and protecting him with her shield.

Brünnhilde's

(voice).

Strike him, Siegmund!
Trust to the sword!

As SIEGMUND, thereupon, aims a deadly blow at HUNDING, a glowing red light breaks from the left through the clouds, in which WOTAN appears, standing over HUNDING, holding his spear across in front of SIEGMUND.

Wotan's

(voice).

Go back from the spear!
In splinters, the sword!

BRÜNNHILDE, in terror before WOTAN, has sunk back with her shield. SIEGMUND's sword breaks on the outstretched spear. HUNDING pierces SIEGMUND's breast with his sword. SIEGMUND sinks to the ground. SIEGLINDE, who hears his death-sigh, falls, with a cry, as if lifeless, to earth:

With SIEGMUND's fall the two lights disappear; dark clouds cover all but the foreground; through them BRÜNNHILDE is indistinctly seen as she turns in haste to SIEGLINDE.

Brünnhilde.

To horse that I may save thee!

She lifts SIEGLINDE quickly on to her horse which is standing near the side gorge, and immediately disappears with her.

At the same moment the clouds divide in the middle, so that HUNDING is clearly seen drawing his sword from the fallen SIEGMUND's breast. WOTAN, surrounded by clouds, stands on a rock behind him, leaning on his spear and looking mournfully on SIEGMUND's corpse.

Wotan
(to Hunding).

Go hence, slave!
Kneel before Fricka:
tell her that Wotan's spear
avenged what wrought her wrong. —
Go! — Go! —

(Before the contemptuous wave of his hand, HUNDING sinks dead to the ground.)

Wotan
(suddenly breaking out in terrible rage).

But Brünnhilde —
woe to the guilty one!
Dire wage shall
she win for her crime,
if my steed o'ertake her in flight!

(He disappears with thunder and lightning. — The curtain falls quickly.)

THIRD ACT.

On the summit of a rocky mountain.

On the right a pinewood encloses the stage. On the left is the entrance to a cave which forms a natural apartment. Above this the rock rises to its highes point. At the back the view is entirely open. Rocks of various heights form a parapet to a precipice which apparently descends abruptly to the background. Occasionally clouds fly past the mountain peak as if driven by storm.

(The names of the eight Valkyries who, besides BRÜNNHILDE, appear in this scene, are: GERHILDE, ORTLINDE, WALTRAUTE SCHWERTLEITE, HELMWIGE, SIEGRUNE, GRIMGERDE, and ROSSWEISSE.)

GERHILDE, ORTLINDE, WALTRAUTE and SCHWERTLEITE have ensconced themselves on the rocky peak around and above the cave: they are in full armour.

Gerhilde

(on the highest point, calling towards the background where a thick cloud passes).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!
Helmwige! Here!
Guide hither thy horse!

A flash of lightning breaks through a passing cloud: in the light a Valkyrie on horseback becomes visible: on her saddle hangs a slain warrior.

Helmwige's

(voice, at the back).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Ortlinde, Waltraute and Schwertleite

(calling to her as she approaches).

Heiaha! Heiaha!

(The cloud with the apparition disappears to the right behind the wood.)

Ortlinde

(calling towards the wood).

By Ortlinde's filly
fasten thy horse:
gladly my grey
will graze near thy chestnut!

Waltraute

(calling towards the wood).

Who hangs at thy saddle?

Helmwige

(coming from the wood).

Sintolt, the Hegeling!

Schwertleite.

Far from the grey, then,
fasten thy chestnut:
Ortlinde's filly
bears Wittig the Irming!

Gerhilde

(coming down lower).

For foes have been ever
Sintolt and Wittig!

Ortlinde
(starts up quickly and runs to the wood).

Heiaha! The horse
attacketh my mare!

Schwertleite and Gerhilde
(laughing aloud).

The heroes' strife
makes foes of the horses!

Helmwige
(calling back into the wood).

Quiet, Brownie!
break not the peace, now.

Waltraute
(has taken GERHILDE's post as watcher on the topmost point).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!
Siegrune, here!
Where stay'st thou so long?

(SIEGRUNE flies past towards the wood in the same manner as HELMWIGE.)

Siegrune's
(voice from the right).

Work to do!
Are the others all here?

The Valkyrie's.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!

(SIEGRUNE has disappeared behind the wood. From below two voices are heard together.)

Grimgerde and Rossweisse
(from below).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!

Waltraute.

Grimgerd' and Rossweisse!

Gerhilde.

Together they ride.

ORTLINDE comes out of the wood with HELMWIGE and the newly arrived SIEGRUNE: from the edge of the precipice all three make signs towards the background.

Ortlinde, Helmwige and Siegrune.

We greet you, travellers!
Rossweiss' and Grimgerde!

All the other Valkyries.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Heiaha! Heiaha!

In a bank of clouds which rises from below and then disappears behind the wood, GRIMGERDE and ROSSWEISSE appear, illumined by a flash of lightning. Both are on horseback and each carries a slain warrior on her saddle.

Gerhilde.

Leave there in the forest
your steeds to graze!

Ortlinde
(calling into the wood).

Lead off the mares
afar from each other,
till our heroes'
anger is calmed!

Helmwige
(while the others laugh).

The grey has paid
for the heroes' anger!

(GRIMGERDE and ROSSWEISSE come out of the wood.)

The Valkyries.

Be welcome! Be welcome!

Schwertleite.

Rode ye valiant ones paired?

Grimgerde.

Apart journeyed we,
and met but to-day.

Rossweisse.

Are we all, then, assembled?
then stay no longer:

to Wallhall wend we our way;
Wotan awaiteth the slain.

Helmwige.

We are but eight,
wanting is one.

Gerhilde.

By the brown-eyed Wälsung
lingers yet Brünnhild'.

Waltraute.

Till she comes hither
still must we stay:
greeting full grim
would Warfather give
if without her we should come.

Siegrune
(on the lookout, calling towards the back to the others).

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
Hallo! Hallo!
In furious haste
there Brünnhilde flies.

The Valkyries
(hastening to the peak).

Heiaha! Heiaha!
Brünnhilde! Hei!

Waltraute.

To the wood guides she
her staggering horse.

Grimgerde.

From fierce riding
how Grane pants!

Rossweisse.

So fast none e'er saw
Valkyrie flying!

Ortlinde.

What lies on her saddle?

Helmwige.

That is no man!

Siegrune.

See, a maid bears she.

Gerhilde.

Where found she the maid?

Schwertleite.

With ne'er a sign
greets she the sisters!

Waltraute.

Heiaha! Brünnhilde,
hearest thou not?

Ortlinde.

Hasten ye
from her horse to help her!

(GERHILDE and HELMWIGE rush to the wood.)

Rossweisse.

To earth sinks down
Grane the strong one!

(SIEGRUNE and WALTRAUTE follow the two others.)

Grimgerde.

From the saddle swiftly
swings she the maid!

The other Valkyries
(hasting to the wood).

Sister! Sister!
What has befall'n?

(All the Valkyries come back to the stage: with them comes BRÜNNHILDE, supporting and leading SIEGLINDE.)

Brünnhilde
(breathless).

Shield me and help
in direst need!

The Valkyries.

Whence rodest thou hither

in such mad haste?
So speed but those who flee!

Brünnhilde.

I flee for the first time
and am pursued!
Warfather follows close!

The Valkyries
(terrified).

Hast lost thy senses?
Speak to us! Say!
Doth Wotan pursue thee?
Fleest thou from him?

Brünnhilde
(anxiously).

O sisters, look
from the rocky summit!
Look to northward
if Warfather nears?

(ORTLINDE and WALTRAUTE spring up and look out.)

Speak! Tell what ye see!

Ortlinde.

A thunder storm
nears from northward.

Waltraute.

Gathering clouds
range themselves there!

The Valkyries.

Warfather rideth
his sacred steed!

Brünnhilde.

The wild pursuer
who hunts me in wrath,
he nears, he nears from northward!
Shield me, sisters!
Shelter this wife!

The Valkyries.

What aileth the woman?

Brünnhilde.

Hear me, then, quickly:
Sieglinde is she,
Siegmund's sister and bride: —
'gainst all the Wälsungs
doth Wotan angrily rage;
to strike the brother
dead in the fight
was Brünnhilde's task;
but Siegmund held I
safe with my shield;
Wotan in wrath
then struck him himself with his spear:
Siegmund fell;
but I fled
forth with the wife;
and to save her
flew I to you
that in danger ye might
hide me from the threatening blow!

The Valkyries
(in great consternation).

What madness urged thee
this deed to do?
Lost one! lost one!
Brünnhilde, lost one!
Brok'st thou,
rebellious Brünnhilde,
Warfather's holy behest?

Waltraute
(on the lookout).

Darkness comes
from the north like the night.

Ortlinde
(on the lookout).

Raging steereth
hither the storm.

The Valkyries
(turning towards the background).

Loud neigheth
Warfather's steed!
Panting hither it flies.

Brünnhilde.

Woe to the wife,
if the god find her here:
for all of the Wälsungs
dooms he to downfall! —
O say, who will lend
the trustiest horse,
to save the wife from his wrath?

The Valkyries.

Wouldst lead us
his rage to defy?

Brünnhilde.

Rossweisse, sister,
lend me but thy courser!

Rossweisse.

From Warfather ne'er
yet fled he in fear.

Brünnhilde.

Helmwige, hear me!

Helmwige.

I brave not our father.

Brünnhilde.

Waltraute! Gerhilde!
Grant me a horse!
Ortlinde! Siegrune!
See my dismay!
True be to me,
as I have been true:
save now this sorrowing wife!

Sieglinde

(who has hitherto stared gloomily and coldly before her, starts up with a repelling gesture, as BRÜNNHILDE embraces her warmly as if to protect her).

Let sorrow not vex thee for me:
only death is my due. —
Who bade thee bear me,
maid, from the battle?
Perchance my death-stroke
I there had won
from the very weapon
that dealt his death;
in life's last moment
made one with him!
Far from Siegmund —
Siegmund, from thee!
O shelter me death,
from remembrance! —
Lest for thy help
my curse should requite thee,
now hearken, maid, to my prayer —
thrust thou thy sword into my heart!

Brünnhilde.

Live still, o woman,
for love doth call thee!
Rescue the pledge
that from him thou hast won:
a Wälsung's life thou dost bear!

Sieglinde

(starts violently: suddenly her face glows with sublime joy).

Rescue me, brave one!
Rescue my child!
Guard me, ye maidens,
with mighty defence!

(An ever-darkening thunderstorm approaches from the back.)

Waltraute

(on the lookout).

The storm cometh near!

Ortlinde
(on the lookout).
Fly, all who fear it!

The Valkyries.
Hence with the woman!
danger is here:
the Valkyries' shelter
dare we not give!

Sieglinde
(on her knees before Brünnhilde).
Rescue me, maid!
rescue the mother!

Brünnhilde
(raises Sieglinde with sudden determination).
Away, then, fly swiftly —
and fly thou alone!
I — stay in thy stead,
draw on me Wotan's anger,
by me holding
the wrathful one here,
whilst thou from his vengeance escap'st.

Sieglinde.
Say, whither shall I turn me?

Brünnhilde.
Which of you, sisters,
journeyed to eastward?

Siegrune.
A forest wild spreads
far to the east:
the Nibelung's hoard
by Fafner thither was borne.

Schwertleite.
There as a dread
dragon he dwelleth,
and in a cave there
guardeth he Alberich's ring!

Grimgerde.

For a helpless woman
no home were there.

Brünnhilde.

And yet from Wotan's wrath
shelter safe were the wood:
our father feareth
and shunneth the place.

Waltraute
(on the lookout).

Raging rides
the god to the rock!

The Valkyries.

Brünnhilde, hear
how he nears like a storm!

Brünnhilde
(urgently).

Fly then swiftly
and turn to the east!
Bold in defiance
endure ev'ry ill, —
hunger and thirst,
thorns and rough ways;
laugh, whether want
or suffering wound!
For, one thing know
and hold it ever:
the world's most glorious hero
bears, o woman,
thy sheltering womb!

(She gives the pieces of Siegmund's sword to SIEGLINDE.)

For him ward thou well
the mighty splinters;
from his father's death-field
by good hap I saved them:
who once shall swing
the sword new wrought —
his name from me let him take —
"Siegfried" in triumph shall live!

Sieglinde.

O radiant wonder!
glorious maid!
Thou bring'st me, true one,
holiest balm!
For him whom we loved
I save the beloved one:
may my thanks yet bring thee
laughing reward!
Fare thou well!
be blest in Sieglinde's woe!

She hastens away on the right in front. Black thunder-clouds surround the height; a fearful storm approaches from the back: s growing fiery light on the right.

Wotan's
(Voice).

Stay! Brünnhild!

The Valkyries.

The rock is reached
by horse and rider!
Woe, Brünnhild'!
raging he comes!

Brünnhilde.

Ah, sisters, help!
my heart is faint!
His wrath will crush me,
if ye no shelter can give.

The Valkyries.

Then hide thee, lost one;
be thou not seen!
Hide thee in our midst
and heed not his call!

(They draw together at the top of the rock whilst they hide BRÜNNHILDE among them.)

Woe! Woe!
Wotan, swings him
raging to earth —

hither haste
his steps for revenge!

WOTAN strides in terrible wrathful excitement from the wood and stops before the group of Valkyries, who have taken up their position on the top of the rock, so as to shield BRÜNNHILDE.

Wotan.

Where is Brünnhilde?
where the rebellious one?
Would ye then dare
to shield her from vengeance?

The Valkyries.

Fearful thy fury soundeth: —
o father, what did thy children,
that they have wakened
thy terrible wrath?

Wotan.

Would ye then mock me?
Heed yourselves, rash ones!
I know: Brünnhilde
hide ye from me.
Turn ye from her,
cast off is she hence-forth,
e'en as her worth
from her she cast!

The Valkyries.

To us fled the pursued one,
for our help prayed she to us;
thy rage awakened
her fear and shrinking.
For our trembling sister
pray we to thee
that thy passion's rage may be calmed!

Wotan.

Weakhearted
and womanish brood!
Such sorry valour
won ye from me?

I fostered you bold
to fare to the field,
hard and relentless
your hearts I wrought,
and ye wild ones now weep and whine
when my wrath on a traitor doth fall?
Then know, ye trembling ones,
what was her crime
for whom your tears now
in pity are shed!
No one but she
knew what lay hid in my bosom;
no one but she
saw to the spring of my spirit;
in her deeds
my desires were born to the day: —
our holy bond
she hath now so disdained
that, faithless, she
my own will hath defied,
my sacred command
openly scorned,
against me she lifted the spear
that by Wotan's will she bore! —
Hear'st thou, Brünnhilde?
thou on whom birny,
helm and spear,
name and renown,
life and delight I bestowed?
Hear'st thou my voice upraised
and shrinking hid'st thee from me,
that thou may'st escape thy doom?

Brünnhilde

(comes forward out of the band of the Valkyries and moves with humble but firm steps down the rock to within a short distance from Wotan).

Here am I, father:
pronounce now my sentence!

Wotan.

I — sentence thee not:
thou thyself thy sentence hast shaped.
My will alone
awoke thee to life:
yet against my will hast thou worked;
thine 'twas alone
to fulfil my commands:
yet against me hast thou commanded;
wish-maid
thou wert to me:
against me thy wish has been turned;
shield-maid
thou wert to me:
against me thy shield was upraised;
lot-chooser
thou wert to me:
against me the lot hast thou chosen;
hero-stirrer
thou wert to me;
against me thou stirredst up heroes.
What once thou wert,
Wotan hath spoken:
what now thou art,
say thou to thyself!
Wish-maid art thou no more;
Valkyrie once wert thou called: —
what now thou art,
henceforth shalt thou be!

Brünnhilde
(violently terrified).

Thou dost cast me off?
What meaneth thy word?

Wotan.

No more shall I send thee from Walhall;
to war-field no more
far'st thou on quest;
no more bring'st thou heroes

to fill my halls:
at the godhead's festal banquet
the drinkhorn for me
thou fillest no more;
thy childlike mouth
no more shall I kiss;
the heavenly host
no more shall know thee;
outcast art thou
from the clan of the gods:
for, broken now is our bond,
henceforth from sight of my face art thou banned.

The Valkyries
(violently terrified).

Horror! Woe!
Sister! O sister!

Brünnhilde.

All thou once gavest
thou tak'st away?

Wotan.

He who wins robs thee of all!
For here on the rock
bound shalt thou be;
defenceless in sleep
locked shalt thou lie:
the man shall master the maid
who shall find her and wake her from sleep.

The Valkyries.

Recall the curse!
o father, repent!
shall the maiden pale
and be withered by man?
Hard-hearted bring not
on her this crying disgrace:
for our sister's shame on us too would fall!

Wotan.

Have ye not heard
Wotan's decree?
From out your troop
must your traitorous sister be banished;
as once she rode
through the clouds with you rides she no longer;
her maidenhood's flower
will fade away:
a husband will gain
all her womanly grace:
the will of her master
she now shall obey,
by the hearth at home shall she spin,
to all mockers a mark for scorn!

(BRÜNNHILDE sinks with a cry on the ground; the Valkyries, horror-struck, recoil violently from her.)

Frights you her lot?
Then fly from the lost one!
Wend ye from her
and bide ye afar!
If one should venture
near her to linger,
in my despite
befriending her fate; —
that rash one shareth her lot:
then heed ye right well my word! —
Hence now away;
hither return not!
Swiftly ride from the mountain
lest ill-fate light on you here!

The Valkyries separate with a wild cry of woe, and rush in hasty flight to the wood, from which they are presently heard riding stormily away. Gradually, during the following music, the storm abates, the clouds disperse: evening twilight and at length night fall with tranquil weather.

WOTAN and BRÜNNHILDE, who still lies outstretched at his feet, remain alone. A long solemn silence. WOTAN and BRÜNNHILDE remain in the same positions.

Brünnhilde

(at length slowly raising her head, tries to meet WOTAN's eyes which are still turned away, and during the following speech she raises herself gradually to her feet).

Was my offence
so laden with shame,
that the offender so shamefully is scourged?
Was there such deep
disgrace in my deed,
that I so deeply must sink in disgrace?
Was then my crime
so dark with dishonour
that it robs me of honour for aye?
O say: father!
look in my eyes:
silence thy wrath,
soften thy rage,
and shew to me clear
the hidden guilt
that in cruel anger doth force thee
to cast off the child of thy heart.

Wotan

(gloomily).

Ask of thy deed,
and that will shew thee thy guilt!

Brünnhilde.

By thy command
only I fought

Wotan.

By my command
didst thou fight for the Wälsung?

Brünnhilde.

So didst thou decree
as lord of the lots!

Wotan.

But my decree
thou knew'st again I recalled!

Brünnhilde.

As Fricka ensnared
thy will to her service;
when thou wert forced to befriend her,
foe wert thou to thyself.

Wotan
(bitterly).

That thou understood'st me, weened I,
and chided thy insolent thought:
but coward and fool
deemedst thou me!
So had I not treason to punish,
all too mean wert thou for my wrath.

Brünnhilde.

No wisdom have I,
yet knew I this one thing,
that the Wälsung thou lovedst.
I knew all the strife
forcing thy will
that drove that love from remembrance.
The other only
couldst thou discern,
which, so sad to sight,
preyed on thy heart —
that Siegmund might not be shielded.

Wotan.

Then knewest thou that
and nathless gave him thy shield?

Brünnhilde.

As for thee I held
but the one in my eyes,
when entrammeled wert thou
by twofold desire,
blindly thy back on him turning!
She who in the field
wards thy back from the foe —

she saw now only
what thou saw'st not: —
Siegmund I beheld.
Death-doom
I brought to him there;
I looked in his eyes,
heard his lament;
I discerned the hero's
bitter distress;
loudly resounded
the plaint of the bold one:
unbounded love's
most hopeless despair,
saddest heart's
most dauntless disdain!
My ears have heard,
my eyes have seen
what, deep in my bosom, with awe
and trembling filled all my heart.
Dazed and shrinking
stood I in shame.
How I might serve him
must I bethink me:
triumph or death
to share with Siegmund:
that seemed only
the lot I could choose!
He who this love
into my heart had breathed,
whose will had placed
the Wälsung at my side,
true only to him —
thy word did I defy.

Wotan.

So thou hast done
what so dearly I had desired,
yet by twofold fate
to my will was denied!

So light deemedst thou
winning of heart's deepest rapture,
when burning woe
in my heart outbroke,
when anguish awoke
the grim intent,
for the world I loved so,
the spring of love
in my tortured heart to imprison?
When 'gainst my own self
in my torment I turned me,
from weakness' pangs
I rose up in frenzy,
furious yearning's
fiercest desire
the fearful design in me wrought,
in the wreck of my ruined world
my unending sorrow to bury: —
then thou wert lapped
in blissful delights;
filled with emotion's
rapturous joy,
thou drankest laughing
the draught of love —
with mine, gall of the god's
bitterest bondage was mixed.
Now thy lightsome heart
henceforth shall lead thee:
from me hast thou turned away!
Aye must I shun thee;
together no more
may we e'er whisper counsel;
henceforth our paths
are parted for ever,
for, while life shall endure
may the god ne'er give thee his greeting!

Brünnhilde.

Unfit was for thee

this foolish maid,
who, stunned by thy counsel,
nought understood,
when but one command
her own counsel made clear:
to love all that thou hadst loved.
Must I then leave thee
and, fearing, shun thee?
must thou loosen
our fast-woven bond,
and half thy being
far from thee banish,
who once belonged to thee only? —
thou god, forget not that!
Thy other self
thou wilt not dishonour!
deal not disgrace
that will shame thee too!
thy own fame would be darkened,
were I the plaything of scorn!

Wotan.

The might of love
thou hast followed fain:
follow now him
who shall force thy love!

Brünnhilde.

Must I then go from Walhall,
no more to have part in thy working?
a man as my master
henceforth must I serve?
to boastful craven
make me not thrall,
not all unworthy
be he who wins!

Wotan.

From Warfather turnedst thou —
he may not fashion thy fate.

Brünnhilde.

From thee rose a glorious race;
that race ne'er shall bring forth a craven:
the bravest of heroes, I know it,
shall bless the Wälsungs' line.

Wotan.

Name not the Wälsungs to me!
When thee I cast off,
cast off were they;
by envy wrecked was the race!

Brünnhilde.

She who turned from thee
rescued the race:
Sieglinde bears
the holiest fruit;
in pain and grief
such as woman ne'er suffered,
will she bring forth
what in fear she hides!

Wotan.

Ne'er seek at my hand
shelter for her,
or for fruit her womb shall bear.

Brünnhilde.

She guardeth the sword,
that thou gavest Siegmund.

Wotan.

The sword that I in splinters struck! —
Strive not, o maid,
to vanquish my spirit,
await now thy fate,
as it must fall;
I cannot change it for thee! —
But hence must I now
far from thee fare;
too long I stay with thee here:

as from me turnedst thou,
turn I from thee;
what wish is thine
I may not e'en know:
the sentence now
must I see fulfilled!

Brünnhilde.

What hast thou decreed
that I shall suffer?

Wotan.

In slumber fast
shalt thou be locked:
who so the helpless one finds
and wakes shall win thee for wife!

Brünnhilde
(falls on her knees).

If fetters of sleep
fast shall bind me,
for basest craven
an easy booty;
this one thing must thou grant me —
in deepest anguish I pray!
o shelter me sleeping
with scaring horrors,
that but the first, most
fearless of heroes
e'er may find me
here on the fell!

Wotan.

Too much thou cravest,
too great a grace!

Brünnhilde
(embracing his knees).

This one thing
must thou grant me!
O crush thou thy child
who clasps thy knee;

tread down thy dear one,
destroy the maid,
let thy spear put out
the light of her life:
but cast not, in thy wrath,
on her this most hateful shame!

(With wild ecstasy.)

By thy command
enkindle a fire;
with flaming guardians
girdle the fell;
to lick with tongue,
to bite with tooth
the craven who rashly dareth
to draw near the threatening rock!

Wotan

(looks with emotion into her eyes, and raises her up).

Farewell, thou valiant,
glorious child!
Thou once the holiest
pride of my heart!
Farewell! farewell! farewell!
Must I forsake thee
and may my welcome
of love no more greet thee,
may'st thou now ne'er more
ride as my comrade,
nor bear me mead at banquet?
must I abandon
thee whom I loved so,
thou laughing delight of my eyes? —
such a bridal fire
for thee shall be kindled
as ne'er yet has burned for a bride!
Threatening flames
shall flare round the fell: —
let withering terrors
daunt the craven!

let cowards fly
from Brünnhilde's rock!
For one alone winneth the bride;
one freer than I, the god!

(BRÜNNHILDE, deeply moved, sinks in ecstasy on WOTAN's breast: he holds her in a long embrace.)

Wotan.

Thy brightly glittering eyes,
that, smiling, oft I caressed,
when valour won
a kiss as guerdon,
when childish lispings
of heroes' praise
from sweetest lips has flowed forth:
those gleaming radiant eyes
that oft in storms on me shone,
when hopeless yearning
my heart had wasted,
when world's delights
all my wishes wakened,
through wild wildering sadness:
once more to-day,
lured by their light,
my lips shall give them
love's farewell!
On mortal more blessed
once may they beam:
on me, hapless immortal,
must they close now for ever.
For so turns
the god now from thee,
so kisses thy godhood away!

He kisses her on both eyes, which remain closed. She sinks, unconscious, softly back into his arms. He bears her gently to a mossy bank in the shade of a broadly-branched fir-tree, on which he lays her down. Once more he gazes on her features and then closes her helmet fast: again his eyes remain for a time sorrowfully on her figure which he at length covers with her long steel shield. — Then, with dignified resolution he strides to the middle of the stage and turns his spear-point towards a large rock.

Loge, hear!
List to my word!
As I found thee of old,
a glimmering flame,
as from me thou didst vanish
in wandering fire;
as once I stayed thee,
stir I thee now!
Appear! come, waving fire
and wind thee in flames round the fell!
Loge! Loge! appear!

At the last call he strikes three times with the spear-point on the rock from which a stream of fire springs up. This quickly grows to a sea of flames which Wotan, with a motion of his spear, directs to encircle the rock.

He who my spear-point's
sharpness feareth
shall cross not the flaming fire!

(He disappears through the flames at the back. — The curtain falls.)

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